Narrative Skills

Narrative skills include being able to understand and tell stories and being able to describe things. These skills are important so children are able to understand what is being read to them. Talk with and listen to the child, frequently encouraging the sharing of experiences and ideas. Give children the opportunity to respond to simple questions about the story or pictures, but do not force them. Be sure that reading stories together is fun for both of you!

Some ideas to help your child’s narrative skills:

1. When your child draws a picture, have him tell you a story to go with the picture. Write down the story on the paper. Have your child retell the story to others. You can also label pictures with words for younger children.

2. Read a book that has a sequence easy for the child to follow. Read the story without much interruption so the child hears the entire sequence, which helps them learn story structure. When the book has been read together many times, help the child tell the story in order. The ability to retell a favorite story is a skill necessary for reading.

3. Choose finger plays or stories that are cumulative or sequential, such as *The House That Jack Built* or *This Little Piggy*. Repeat them so that children can say what comes next.

4. Make a book about a trip you take together. You can use photographs or draw simple pictures. Help your child tell about the trip in sequence, such as “The first day we flew on an airplane. Do you remember who picked us up at the airport?”

5. Use props, flannel board, etc. for children to retell a story. You can make simple puppets or felt characters for favorite stories, such as “The Three Billy Goats Gruff.” As you act out the story, you can ask your child, “What happens next?”

6. Talk with children using open-ended questions, not questions that can be answered by pointing or by yes or no. Encourage children to use descriptive words to talk about taste, smell, texture and other qualities. You might want to keep a journal of some of the funny or interesting things your child says!

7. Encourage children to predict what might happen before or during the reading of a book.

8. Encourage your child to recount events in order or tell you about things that have a sequence, such as what they do when they get up in the morning or go to a birthday party.